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ABSTRACT

This guide contains three workshop modules to manage group discussion on the topic of the influence of the news media in the '90s. Module 1 instructs "How To Evaluate a News Story." Module 2 suggests "The Camera Never Lies - Or Does It?" Module 3 examines "What's Missing in the News: Democracy and the Media." Handouts accompanying module 3 include: (1) "You Are the Producer/Sample News Stories"; (2) "How To Analyze a News Story"; (3) "Scorecard"; (4) "Photo Opportunity"; (5) "Project Censored"; (6) "News Broadcast Story Lineup"; and (7) "Alternative News Sources." An evaluation form, follow-up ideas, and resources conclude the guide. (EH)

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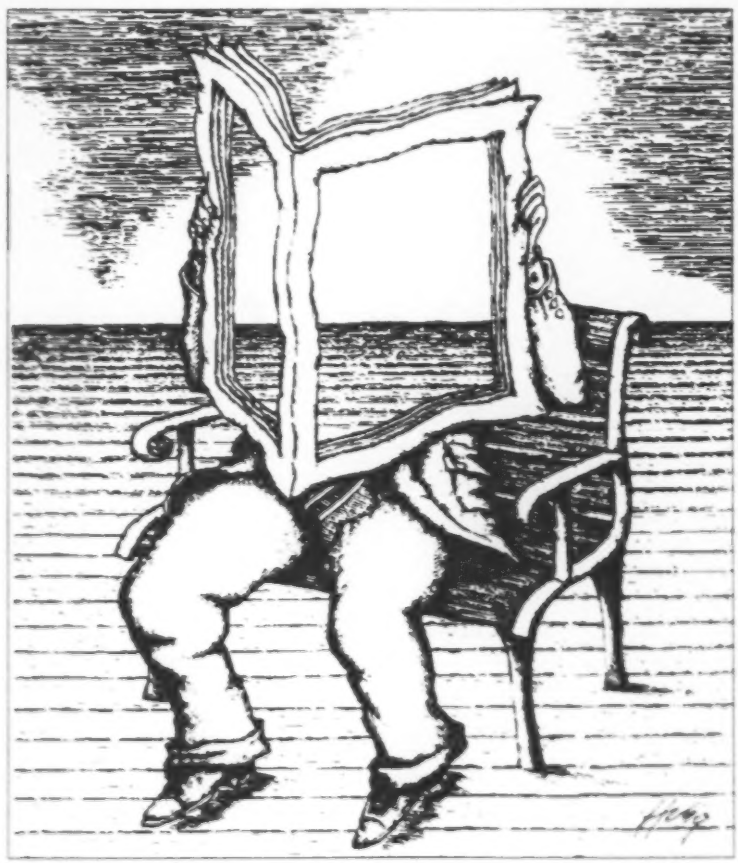
ED 408 216

News For The '90s:

How to Analyze the News Media

A Media Literacy Workshop Kit™

Leader's Guide and Handout Masters



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News for the '90s:

How to Analyze the News Media

Leader's Guide and Handout Masters

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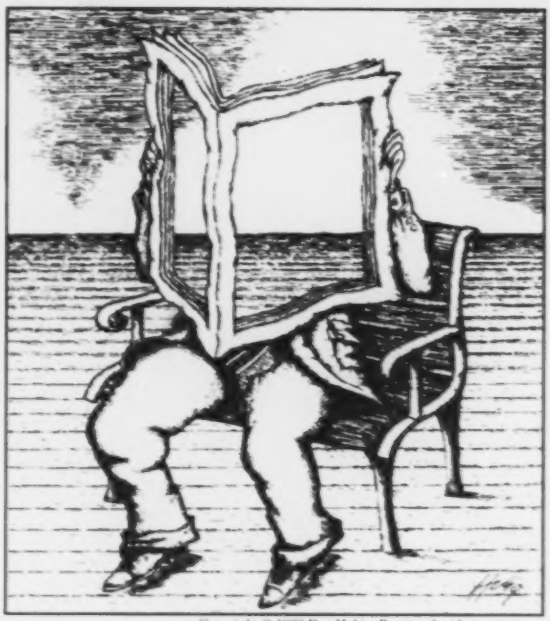
What You Need to Know to Lead This Workshop

News for the '90s



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EDITOR'S NOTE: This 1994 edition of News for the '90s contains changes from the first edition that you may want to note. We've updated the three workshop modules to reflect more recent news stories while retaining the original lessons and activities. Using our most recent Workshop Kits™ as a guide, we've also streamlined the format of the workshop modules to make it easier for leaders to guide each session.

Most importantly, a special Followup section has been added at the end of the Leader's Guide to address some of the profound changes and trends in the news media since it was first published in 1991—just three short years ago! Some of these issues include the increase of "checkbook journalism," the growing influence of tabloid news programs, the use of video news releases, the merging of news and entertainment and the growth of reality TV shows. You'll want to read this section and consider ways to incorporate some of these issues into the session activities.

The question of what's news and how to report it is of enormous political and cultural significance. The news sets an agenda of issues worthy of public scrutiny and government action. As voters, people count on the news to provide "objective" reporting of events. Editors carefully exercise "news judgment" to determine which stories are newsworthy and how to cover them fairly.

Not so long ago, this wasn't the case. Back in the days of the American revolution, newspapers were partisan. Every paper had a political agenda, whether it was Federalist, Whig, Democratic, or Republican. Eventually, however, publishers realized they could sell more advertising space if they sold to all political players. Thus, "objective" journalism was born — a by-product of publishers' desires to make bigger profits. But don't be fooled. Reporters and editors still shape the news; it's just harder to see how.

Is it truly possible for editors and reporters to be objective? Patricia Hynds points out in *Balance Bias with Critical Questions* (*Media&Values* #50, *News for the 90's: A Question of Values*, pp. 5-7) that, "Every reporter brings to the story his/her own biases and world view. Each reporter has to make choices in writing the story: what to include, what to leave out, what sources to use." This statement is equally true of editors as they sift through hundreds of possible stories and decide what to cover.

Without us even being aware of it, news coverage favors certain opinions and ignores others.

Most journalists and editors tend to support "centrist" positions, a posture that supports the status quo, argues Jeff Cohen in *How the Journalistic Middle Ground Shapes the News* (pp. 8-9). He points out that mainstream media may question the tactics of government but rarely the *goals* of government policy.

Moreover, mainstream media tend to rely on government sources for information. Indeed most national and international news originates in government press offices. Other groups outside the government often find it difficult to get news coverage of their opinions, and without it, their positions are rarely given serious debate.

So without us even being aware of it, news coverage favors certain opinions and ignores others. Unfortunately, the images that accompany news stories are no more objective. News photographs are often taken at "photo opportunities," carefully staged settings designed so that public officials look their best. Back in the news room, new computer technologies allow for "touching up" reality, sometimes even combining images from separate photographs into a single picture (see *Touching Up Reality*, pp. 10-11). The blurring of actual events and dramatized set ups has spread throughout the news media. TV news has flirted with re-enacting news events, while "video news releases," produced by corporate sponsors and aired on news programs, look like news stories but actually promote products.

All of these developments have led to a new type of news program — "infotainment" — which emphasizes entertaining news (see *Whatever Happened to the News?* pp. 2-4). These shows make for high ratings and high profits for media owners.

Today media owners often seem to care more about profits than about public information. News has become, first and foremost, a business, and it's an attractive business for investment. Noted journalist and scholar Ben Bagdikian observes that despite the 25,000 media outlets in the United States, 29 corporations control most of the newspapers, magazines, books, TV, and movies.

"Modern democracies need a choice of politics and ideas," he writes in *The Information Machines*, "and that choice requires access to truly diverse and competing sources of news, literature, entertainment and popular culture" Media conglomerates like Time-Warner, GE/NBC, and Cap Cities/ABC have been formed to increase business efficiency and minimize risk — *not* to broaden the information available to the public. Is NBC free to report on negative stories concerning GE? Can Time Inc.'s magazines report freely on Warner Brothers movies?

Perhaps even more insidious than news bias are the news stories *missing* from the news. Stories of great importance are routinely ignored or under-reported. Project Censored (*News for the 90's*, p. 7) makes an annual tally of the ten most under-reported stories in the news media. For the year 1993, the high murder rate among young people in the United States made the list.

These facts about reporting make it even more difficult for the public to get reliable news — and make your role as a teacher or leader essential. In a media age dominated by "centrist bias," "touching up" reality, and big business profitmaking, citizens must apply critical thinking skills which encourage informed democratic dialogue rather than simply accept the stories of those who control the mainstream media.

Perhaps the simplest way to foster the development of these critical thinking skills is to encourage group or class members to seek out smaller, alternative news media so participants can commence comparing several news sources or even checking out stories themselves. Eventually, this kind of creative interaction with the media can mold a more informed public and begin to reveal the underlying political, economic and moral values of our mass-mediated society. When that happens we may see a renewal of democracy.

Today, media owners often seem to care more about profit than about public information. News has become, first and foremost, a business...

This workshop kit provides ideas and resources for three sessions which explore the news media. You may want to use all or selected sessions or only parts of certain sessions. We encourage experimentation. The first page of each workshop includes a list of *Objectives* that describes session activities and outlines preparation required of the workshop leader. The workshops themselves begin with an *Introduction* that states the conceptual goals of the session. Note that each session concludes with an *Action* segment that encourages participants to find ways to affect their media environment. You may think of other ways to encourage action besides those suggested.

The Three Sessions

Module One: *How to Evaluate a News Story*

The first session begins with a discussion of why the news is important, and identifies the power of the news in setting priority issues for the public. Two additional concepts are introduced: *objectivity* and *news judgment*. We've included *How To Analyze A News Story* as an introduction to detecting bias in the news. Participants will have the opportunity to analyze editors' news judgment as well as analyze their own news judgment for bias.

Participants will also discuss the *agenda setting* power of the news media. By covering certain issues, the news media helps make those issues high public priorities. For

example, environmentalists hammered away at the press for decades. How did environmentalism become the number one issue on the public agenda? When the news media decided to pay attention. Participants will also discover the impossibility of objective reporting and the inevitable bias of news judgment.

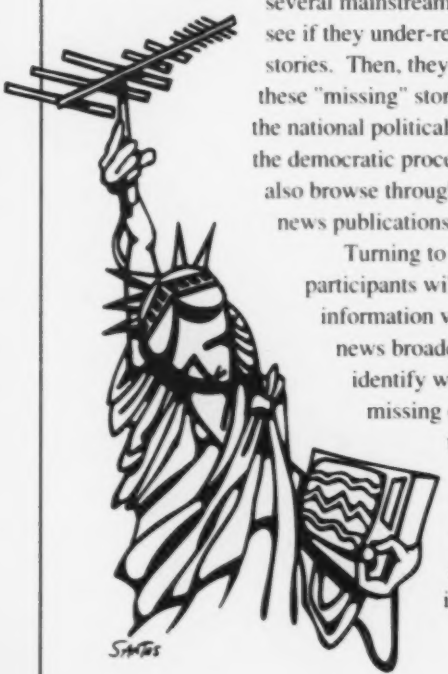
Module Two: *The Camera Never Lies — Or Does it?*

The second session examines production techniques used to make events "look real" and will help participants distinguish between real events and re-enactments. Participants will plan their own "video news release" as a way of understanding more fully the role of producers in determining the meaning and message of a news story.

Participants will also become familiar with ways in which images can be manipulated. Participants will learn to see behind *photo opportunities* and *video news releases* (news-like PR releases from government, business and other sources — see page 4 of Session Two's Leader's Guide). Participants will also become acquainted with production techniques that create realistic effects — camera angles and movement, grainy footage, sound effects, and the use of actors to look like "real" people in interviews.

Module Three: *What's Missing in the News: Democracy and the Media*

Session Three looks at the quality of TV news and what it does and doesn't include. Participants will evaluate several mainstream media sources to see if they under-report certain kinds of stories. Then, they'll reflect on how these "missing" stories reflect and shape the national political agenda and affect the democratic process. Participants will also browse through several alternative news publications.



Turning to electronic media, participants will also evaluate the information value of a nightly news broadcast, and will identify what stories may be missing or under-reported in their news sources. Participants will also become familiar with alternative news and information sources.

What's in the Kit and How Does it Work?

A key resource in the workshop process is the issue of *Media&Values* included in this kit: *News for the '90s: A Question of Values*. The workshop sessions expand and build on the articles and ideas in the magazine. Read the recommended articles before conducting each session. Also, consider having participants purchase their own copy of the issue to read in preparation for each session. Quantity discounts are available from the Center for Media Literacy 1-800-226-9494.

What Does It Take? Leading Media Literacy Workshops

Most people know a lot about the media already. You don't need a Ph.D. in communications to help them reexamine their knowledge. Your own experiences with the media coupled with the time you spend reading and reflecting on *News for the '90s* (*Media&Values #50*) will provide you with the basic tools you need to begin exploring media literacy. The magazine also provides suggestions for additional reading material or videos you may want to watch with your group. A few simple suggestions may help you direct discussion:

- When possible, arranges seats in a circle so that all group members can see one another. You'll be surprised how much this helps group discussions!
- Group participation is essential to the success of your media literacy program. Ask people who have not spoken whether they have thoughts they would like to share. Most of the time even the shyest participants will enter into discussion if they feel they don't have to compete with others to speak.
- If no one immediately responds after you ask a question, pause before you offer an answer yourself. Often participants just need a moment to formulate their thoughts. Silence is not bad—participants will want to break it!
- Another way of getting discussion going is to give participants a minute to write a key idea or thought down on a piece of paper before opening discussion by the whole group.
- Exercises work best for groups of 10 to 30 people. If more than 40 plan to attend, recruit a co-leader who can help you manage discussion in smaller sub-groups as well as monitor time.
- If you're nervous about the workshop, ask a friend or family member to sit down and do a dress rehearsal with you. They'll thank you later for their newly-acquired media literacy skills.
- Many of the articles, sidebars and boxes included in the magazine *News for the '90s: How to Watch the News* can be turned into teaching resources. Feel free

to summarize the ideas you encounter in your reading for participants. Make note of the statistics cited in articles and present them during sessions. Statistics often interest participants and they lend credibility to your presentations.

Organizing *News for the '90s* Workshops

News for the '90s is designed for adult or older youth groups and can be presented in a variety of group settings:

- By parenting groups that want to learn media literacy skills and pass them on to their children;
- By teachers and counselors in middle schools, high schools and colleges;
- By youth or adult leaders in religious groups of all faiths;
- By a Scout troop, youth club or youth service group;
- By women's or men's organizations that sponsor discussion groups;
- By adult or senior citizen groups that provide education and enrichment programs.

Think about using the modules as a series of weekly workshops or as a series of individual sessions in a day-long event. The instructions for each module include Followup Activities that offer ideas for subsequent workshop session on related themes. Use the Followup ideas on pages 29-32 to develop additional sessions.

In Schools

If you will be presenting the modules in a classroom setting, be prepared for student enthusiasm. Students tend to get very involved in media literacy activities. Indeed, they often know more about the media than their teachers do!

These workshops can be used in conjunction with a social studies, communications, mass media or journalism unit. English and theater arts teachers will also find the workshops useful in developing students' critical think skills.

With slight adaptation, *News for the '90s* can also be used for younger groups such as middle school students. You'll have to split individual sessions up, however, since classes for this age group are generally shorter than the 90 minutes recommended for these sessions.

In Community Organizations

If you will be using *News for the '90s* in a religious or community organization, try to link your workshop to the regular activities of existing groups such as church youth organizations, women's programs, senior citizens' groups, the PTA, adult education programs, singles get-togethers, etc. Tailor module activities to the interests of the group. Feel free to design additional lessons using the Followup resources listed at the back of this Leader's Guide.

Try to arrange to meet in the same room each session. When you request a meeting room, ask whether you can post materials inside the meeting room or elsewhere in the building. An ongoing bulletin board adds interest as the sessions build.

Further Ideas for Leading the Sessions

- Perhaps the most important thing you can do to make the sessions relevant and enjoyable to your group is to choose videos, TV newsclips, newspaper stories and other sample news items that are important to your group or class. This may mean, at times, making changes in session plans. Of course, you can also do things exactly as they are suggested if you wish. The sessions are designed to allow flexibility in choice of examples and discussion.
- This Leader's Guide is designed so that you may hold it in one hand as you lead each session. The left column of the guide provides a quick outline of the session. If you've read the material through two or three times, you should be able to lead the sessions mainly from this outline. The right column gives more detailed information, like discussion questions and general notes in case you forget or don't have as much time to prepare.
- In many of these sessions we suggest that you record television programs off the air (such as nightly news programs or CNN Headline News) for viewing with the group. Try to record these TV programs several days in advance as this will give you time to preview what you've recorded. Some programs will illustrate points better than others. For the purposes of discussion and analysis, you may want to look for particularly salient examples of news bias, photo opportunities, etc. On the other hand, you may choose less obvious examples. Bias in the American news media is more subtle than in many countries. Detecting it can require an eye for detail as well as an eye for the obvious. See which type of video

'Modern democracies need a choice of politics and ideas, and that choice requires access to truly diverse and competing sources of news, literature, entertainment and popular culture.'
- Ben Bagdikian

clip works best for you.

- To foster creative action after the sessions are finished, encourage group or class members to bring in their own news discoveries — alternative news stories to share, obvious examples of bias or items being "left out." Be aware that your group or class may have interests that you never imagined. You may even want to allow group or class members to plan their own session in addition to or in place of one or more of the planned sessions.
- Plan a field trip to a local newsstand to not only see what kinds of news publications are available but also alternative publications that seem to be missing.
- Emblazon a wall of your meeting room or class room with news media themes — you can collect political cartoons, alternative articles and headlines, striking advertisements for news magazines or TV news shows, etc.

Reprint Permission

The purchase of this workshop kit includes reprint permission for handouts in unaltered form for those participating in the workshop sessions. Copyright must be clearly visible. Other materials may not be reproduced without written permission from the Center for Media Literacy.

Evaluations

Feedback is a leader's best friend. Be sure to save 10 minutes at the end of each workshop session to obtain comments that will improve the effectiveness of future session. Evaluations will also make it apparent which concepts participants understand best.

An evaluation form is included, but your evaluation can also take the form of a frank discussion at the end of the session (in fact, all of the sessions in this kit suggest this strategy).

Or, ask for written evaluations. On a piece of paper, ask participants to complete these two statements:

"My lasting impression of this session is..."

"The one thing I would change about this workshop is..."

Make a few notes so that you remember how to improve the next session.

Finally, send news of your workshop to the Center for Media Literacy. We're eager to know what you learned and who attended. Good luck!

A Note About Videotape Copyright Restrictions

Since we often recommend that groups view commercially available video tapes, a few notes about U.S. copyright restrictions are appropriate. The following is not legal advice—it is your responsibility to assure that resources you use are shown honestly and legally. For more information contact Dr. Jerome Miller of Copyright Information Services (206) 378-5128.

1. **According to "fair use" practice in U.S. copyright law, schools may show portions of videotapes and television shows for educational purposes in regularly scheduled classes. Videotapes may not be shown in the classroom for entertainment or recreation. Off-air recordings must be used within 10 "teaching days," but may be retained for 45 days for evaluative purposes. Video segments should come from a legal copy (one that is rented or purchased).**

2. **With respect to religious organizations, there is an unfortunate lack of clarity about just what is allowable under U.S. "fair use" provisions. Use discretion and be sure to adhere to the rules otulined in the preceding paragraph. For more information, write the National Council of Churches Communications Office, Room 860, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115-0050. Ask for the free pamphlet: "Video Copyright Guidelines for Pastors and Church Workers."**

3. **Canadian copyright laws differ from U.S. laws. In Canada, off-air taping of programs infringes copyright law leaving the person subject to legal action and fines. We suggest you ask participants to view selected programs ahead of time. However, some Canadian news programs are cleared for use with groups and are available from the National Film Board of Canada, 150 John Street, Toronto, ON, M5V 3C3, and from CBC Educational Series, Box 500, Station A, Toronto, ON, M5W 1E6. For more advice on Canadian copyright law, write the Association for Media Literacy, 40 McArthur St., Weston, ON, M9P 3M7.**

Background Information

Key Concepts of Media Literacy

This kit is based on the premise that viewers of media can be educated about how to become *media literate*, that is, they can learn to understand how and why media function they way they do. The basic principle underlying this expectation is that viewers, readers and listeners *negotiate* the meaning of any print or broadcast *text*.

This *negotiation* depends on many factors including age, sex, ethnic background and personal history. In fact, no two people experience even identical media texts in the same way. Indeed, we each create our own meanings and significances as we experience media.

This idea turns the table on the common assumption that the media victimize passive audiences. Audiences are continuously wrestling with media messages; they are not passive at all. But for those unaware of some basic concepts of media literacy, media makers have the upper hand. Media makers know the tricks of the trade—and they use these to manipulate everything—intentionally or unintentionally—from an increase in the sales of Pepsi to changes in public opinion about how the economy is fairing.

Media literacy education can help people learn to filter and change the way they experience media messages by questioning, challenging and contradicting—or supporting and reinforcing—what they see and hear. Key concepts are *active engagement* and *critical reflection*.

Four principles make up the essential framework for any media literacy study. You'll find these ideas embedded in each of the workshop sessions in this kit.

1. Media are constructions.

Whether we talk about the nightly news or a billboard, all media are *constructions*. News gathering—a media form that we often think of as most real—nevertheless involves careful selection and clever presentation. Some words and sources are included, others are edited out. Images are selected, framed and lit. Interviewees are made up and costumed. The results may look natural, but they are not.

2. Media use identifiable techniques.

One way to begin to recognize that all media are constructions is to "de-construct"—or take apart—the media world by identifying camera angles, music, special effects and splashy layouts that heighten our response and grab our attention.

Media use some obvious techniques; lighting creates a mood, camera zooms add impact, threatening music makes horror films scarier. Each medium, whether electronic or print, has its own production techniques.

3. Media are businesses with commercial interests.

Media are ad-driven businesses. The more ads they sell, the more money they make. In 1991, U.S. corporations spent $130 billion dollars on advertising. That's the equivalent of $6 per week for every man, woman and child in the U.S. We are bombarded with ads everywhere, everyday.

For media outlets, ads take top priority. Newspapers lay out ads on their pages first. The space remaining is devoted to news. Likewise, TV programs don't exist simply to entertain us. They are there to insure that a certain number of viewers will be watching when a commercial comes on. Corporate sponsors pay TV stations based on the number of people they expect to be watching. And it isn't just sheer numbers they're looking for. Advertisers want specific kinds of viewers who have the desire and the ability to spend their money on the advertisers' product. TV programs are designed so that the right people will watch when the commercials come on.

4. Media contain ideologies/value messages.

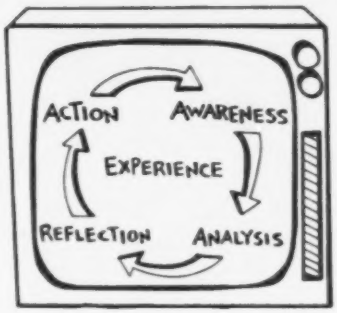
Although it continues to be a popular idea, there is no such thing as value-free media. All media—TV, movies, news, sports, game shows, video games, even supposedly "objective" newspapers—contain points of view. They contain values.

How do we learn to recognize what these values are? Media consumers can learn how to distinguish values in the dramatic elements of a plot, to separate the skeletal boy-meets-girl storyline form the subtle sexism that may be embedded in word choice, characterization, costuming, etc.

Media literacy teaches critical thinking and critical reading of all media so that people can recognize the values media carry, and then choose to accept or reject them.

Examining the Media: An Active Learning Model

The goal of *News for the '90s* is to make you and your group members aware of the enormous social and political impact of news reporting upon our media culture. The



group activities have been organized around a four-step learning process that is used in all Media Literacy Workshop Kits™: *Awareness*, *Analysis*, *Reflection*, and *Action*. The method can be explained in a few simple words: "Oh!" (*Awareness*), "How?" (*Analysis*), "So?" (*Reflection*) and "Go!" (*Action*). Becoming aware of media culture, analyzing its products and processes, measuring it against our own values and beliefs and taking appropriate action—these are steps toward active engagement with our media world.

Each module includes awareness, analysis, reflection and action steps. You'll find four objectives listed at the beginning of each module. Each one represents one stage in the process. In the *Awareness* step, participants begin to discover and articulate their own ideas and experience. This offers them a chance to identify aspects of their everyday media lives that they may never have stopped to think about. In Module One, for instance, participants consider the relationship between the headline and content of a news story.

In the *Analysis* step, participants come to understand some of the political, economic, social and cultural causes that make the media they way they are. For instance, Module 2 analyzes why a "White House story" is in virtually every national news broadcast.

Reflection is the step in which we move beyond the media as we know them (and our response to them) and imagine media as we might like them to be. The reflection step requires a leap of the imagination and recognition of the ethical values and democratic principles that guide our lives. Critical reflection suggests our power to dream, imagining action for change.

Finally, the *Action* step gives participants an opportunity to formulate constructive action ideas, ideas that will lead to changes in their own lives, and eventually in our media systems as well. Each module concludes with a call for action. Participant action plans will vary. Some groups will form task forces to monitor the news for bias or stereotyping. Others may introduce media literacy activities to their family viewing at home. Encourage participants to outline action plans that are natural for them.

Learning About Media by Making Media

Whether it's video camcorders or desktop publishing software, the equipment you need to make your own media is increasingly available through schools, libraries, and community centers. Some of your workshop participants may own their own camcorders. Public access cable facilities and media art centers also offer workshops that enable community members to rent video equipment inexpensively and make their own TV programs.

Media production can complement the understanding people get from analyzing the media. By making media, we become better equipped to deconstruct the media presented to us by networks, newspaper chains, cable channels and film studios. Media production heightens our ability to understand the decision-making process that goes into making media messages.

If you're leading the sessions for a group of students, you may find that they are already experienced at making news media since most schools have journalism or communication studies that provide students with media production skills as part of their education. Working on the school newspaper, for instance, gives students practical experience with making the news—from reporting a news story to fitting the advertisements on a page.

But while media production activities are instructive, they do not substitute for analytical work of media. That's what distinguishes media literacy from career-oriented broadcast or journalism training. The goal of media literacy education is not to become amateur producers but rather to engage the media in our lives. We do this by exploring media's impact upon our cultural, political and social worlds and questioning its messages and evaluating its techniques. This process empowers us to choose whether to accept or reject the values conveyed daily through the media.

MODULE

1

How to Evaluate a News Story

Concept: Participants role play as news editors and reporters to determine what makes a story "news."

Goals:

- To experience the role of news editor.
- To explore the agenda-setting power of the news and news editors.
- To define the factors that go into news judgment and question whether *objectivity* is really possible in journalism.
- To learn how to analyze a new story for bias.
- To determine actions for change that they can take after the session.

Leader Preparation:

- In ***News for the 90's***, read:
  Whatever Happened to the News (p. 2)
  Sensational Reporting Satisfies an Age-Old Appetite (p. 4)
  Left/Right/Center (p. 8)
  Beyond the Myth of Objectivity (p. 21)
  How To Analyze a News Story (p. 22)
- Make up an imaginary news story. For example: "Three teenagers thrown off the road by speeding vehicle. Killed instantly. Names not yet released."
- Arrange the room so that the group can easily move to smaller groups of 4-6 and back again to the larger group.
- Review and collect two different daily newspapers for discussion of front pages and headlines.

Materials Needed:

- Two different daily newspapers from the same day for each small group of 4-6 people.
- Copies of Handout #1 *You Are the Producer/Sample News Stories*, and Handout #2 *How to Analyze a News Story* for all participants.
- Copies of one short news story (newspaper or news magazine) or a portion of a transcript from a TV news program. A good source of transcripts for several news shows is *Journal Graphics* in New York. Transcripts are usually about $5 each, including shipping and handling (but call first). Their address is: Journal Graphics, 267 Broadway New York, NY 10007, 1-800-825-5746.
- Board and chalk or tablet paper and marker
- Paper and pens for all participants
- Tape

Required Time: 1 1/2 to 2 hours

Module 1

Introduction: Briefly explain that the theme of this session is how to evaluate a news story. A good place to start is by bringing up a current news story (local or national) and ask what made this story news. The more current the story the better since most participants will be familiar enough with it to express some kind of opinion.

Awareness
(40 minutes)

(Begin with a philosophical discussion of the news. The articles from *News for the 90's* (especially "Sensational Reporting Satisfies an Age-Old Appetite" and "How the Journalistic Middle Ground Shapes the News") may suggest questions to you, or try these:

- What needs does news meet in us?
- What are some of the events and issues that you consider news?
- By acknowledging and covering certain topics the news "creates" issues. What are some specific examples of this "creating" of issues?
- Why do you suppose that, with all the many things that happen in a day, the mainstream news media (*New York Times, Washingtong Post*, the three networks, even *National Public Radio*) usually cover the same stories in similar ways?

Have Participants Write Headlines:

Ask everyone to write two headlines for the news story you are about to describe to them. Assign one-third of the group a 50 letter headline, one-third a 35 letter headline, and one-third of the group a 20 letter headline. Spaces count as letters!

For instance: "Three teenagers thrown off the road by a speeding vehicle. Killed instantly. Names not yet released." Allow a few minutes for participants to think of headlines.

Note how different headlines emphasize different aspects of the story. You might also discuss visual factors that influence headlines.

Distribute and Compare Newspaper Samples:

Distribute one set of the two different newspapers from the same day to small groups of 4-6. Have each group answer the following questions:

1. Compare *headlines* for the same story in the two papers. How do the headlines differ in tone and implication? How do the headlines influence the way one reads the articles?
2. Compare *photographs* connected with the same story in the two newspapers. In what ways are the photos similar or different? What do the photos suggest about the story? What are some ways you see that headlines and photographs affect interpretations of news stories?
3. Compare *front pages*. Which stories are on both front pages? Which are only on one front page? What do you see as the significance of the front page?

Key Points:

1. Headlines and photographs emphasize aspects of a story, implying attitudes and meanings.
2. What is "front page news" or newsworthy for one editor is not "front page news" to another. Still, mainstream editors end up choosing remarkably similar news and views.
3. The front page is where the public gets its sense of the important issues of the day.

News Judgment:

Distribute Handout #1, *You Are the Producer/Sample News Stories*. Use it as the basis for group discussion on how news judgment by news directors determines what stories are included in TV news broadcasts.

Distribute Handout #1:

In same small groups of 4-6,

- Pretend you are the editorial team for a local television news broadcast.
- Using the *Sample News Stories* portion of Handout #1, determine a line up that reflects the competing needs of newsworthiness, timeliness, picture quality, time restrictions, and balance. You are limited to a 21-23 minute broadcast.
- Write your story lineup and the length of each story on a large piece of paper, then tape it to the wall.
- Choose a "reporter" from your group to share your lineup with all the participants.

Discussion:

Compare program lists posted on walls. Possible questions for discussion:

- What similarities and differences exist?
- What prompted your group to choose that story first, last, etc.?
- What does all this indicate about the *objectivity* of editors?

Analysis

(20-30 minutes)

While still in groups, distribute Handout #2 *How To Analyze a News Story* and have the group review the Handout item by item.

Distribute Handout #2:

- In pairs, read the news story or transcript.
- Using Handout #2 as a guide, identify the techniques used in the news story or transcript (don't be disappointed if you can't find them all).

Discussion:

Possible discussion questions:

- There is journalistic disagreement about whether *objectivity* is really possible. What do you think?
- Assuming that some definition of *objectivity* is possible in journalism, how would you judge the *objectivity* of a story?

Reflection

(10-35 minutes)

Choose one or more of the following activities:

1. In small groups, choose an issue you are concerned about that gets little media attention. (You may want to help out by listing a few topics). Discussion questions and activities:

- What media constraints limit coverage of this issue?
- What could supporters of the issue do to get coverage from the mainstream media?
- What are some alternative ways that this issue can be put before the public?

2. In small groups, choose one of the news stories or photographs discussed earlier that particularly interested you. Discussion questions and activities:

- What groups (ideological, ethnic, political, etc.) might have an interest in this story? Write a headline from several of these perspectives.
- Write a headline from your own perspective.
- Which headlines seem less biased? Why?
- Try writing an interesting unbiased headline.

3. Read the following quote from Patricia Hynds (p. 5): "Every reporter brings to the story his/her own biases and world view. Each has to make choices...what to include, what to leave out, what sources to use." Use the following questions to discuss or analyze Hynds' statement:

- What biases and world view predominate in the media sources we have been examining?
- What specific examples from the articles, headlines, photographs or videos illustrate these world views?

Action

(10-15 minutes)

1. If your group or class identified at least one significant way of gaining mainstream media coverage for an issue of interest, organize a team to carry out the suggestion. Ask for a progress report at future sessions.

2. If your group or class had a particular interest in a story that was presented in a biased way, organize a team to prepare a letter or, if possible, to visit the source with their concerns. It might be useful to take along (or reference if you're writing a letter) an alternative source that presents a different perspective on the story (see the supplementary resource *Alterna-*

tive News Sources for suggestions). Ask for a report at the next session.

3. Ask group or class members to commit to spend an hour this week consciously *listing* biases they see in news stories they see or read. Ask participants to bring examples of these biases and their list to the next session, along with ideas for possible actions in response (including writing letters to *congratulate* sources that present *less* biased news stories on related topics).

4. If a certain story piqued your group's ire, arrange to write the reporter or editor of the publication or news show and ask that your side be presented. Participants could *write* a story that would give another perspective and perhaps try to get it published or mentioned on a TV news show. Ask for a report at the next session.

Evaluation and Closing:
(10 minutes)

Get feedback for improving future sessions. Use the Evalution form provided on page 29 or ask the participants to quickly tell you what they liked about this session. Then ask what they were disappointed with. Take notes so that you improve your leadership performance next time!.

Distribute Evaluation Form:

Go around the room and ask each participant to name one issue they would most like to see get better coverage.

Remind group of next meeting time and place.

Thank you's to participants.

MODULE

2

The Camera Never Lies — Or Does It?

Concept:

Participants will explore news media's use of photo opportunities and production techniques in newspaper and TV shows that make pictures "look real."

Goals:

- To learn to identify ways the medi shape the news.
- To learn what makes pictures and TV footage look real.
- To be able to distinguish real news footage from re-encatments.

Leader Preparation:

- In ***News for the 90's***: read:
  Touching Up Reality (p. 10)
  Making The News Pay (p. 12)
- Record one evening's national news — one with a "White House story" (virtually every U.S. national news broadcast has one). Cue the tape to the "White House story" segment.
- Record a show that uses re-enactments, such as, *America's Most Wanted* or *Unsolved Mysteries*. Choose one segment of the show (usually about 8 minutes) that illustrates several of the "look real" techniques such as jerky camera work, weird angles, grainy, poorly lit footage, unprofessional sound effects, news-like interviews that use actors, etc. Cue the tape to this portion of the show.

Materials Needed:

- Copy of nightly news broadcast and show that uses re-enactments, such as, *America's Most Wanted, Unsolved Mysteries*.
- A VCR and monitor.
- One copy of Handout #3 *Scorecard* (or more if using several clips, see the "Analysis" section on the next page) and copies of Handout #4 *Photo Opportunity* for all participants.
- Paper and pencils for each participant.
- Board and chalk or tablet and markers.
- Tape.

Required Time:

1 1/2 to 2 hours

Module 2

Introduction:

Briefly explain that the theme of this session is how media shapes the news through photo-opportunities and production techniques. A good place to begin is perhaps asking participants their views on the media coverage during the last Presidential campaign. Did the news media cover the candidates equally and fairly?

Ask each participant to introduce themselves, and, if they like, share their thoughts on the above question.

Awareness

(20-30 minutes)

Ask participants to define "photo-op." This is a key concept for this session. A photo-op is a photo that is deliberately staged for a desired effect, generally to present the subject in a favorable light. Most importantly, it is planned and set up by public relations specialists, not the subjects themselves.

Distribute Handout #3:

- Distribute Handout #3, *Photo Opportunity* to see exactly how "news" photographs are often staged right down to tape on the floor to indicate where subjects are to stand.

Discussion:

Possible discussion questions:

- What do you think President Bush's public relations people were trying to accomplish in setting up the photo the way they did? What difference does it make who stands where?
- Describe a time when you have done the same kind of thing (group photos, or photos for resumes, etc.). What were you trying to accomplish in setting up your photo? How did you accomplish that?
- What kind of impression does the public get of leaders photographed exclusively at photo-ops?

Cue video clip:

Cue your "White House story" clip from the evening news. As the group views the clip, ask them to notice the pictures used in the story and suggest that they consider:

- What segments might have been shot as photo opportunities?
- What aspects of the coverage indicate the White House's preferences? Where are the cameras?
- What kind of pictures resulted?
- What kind of impact do you think the White House is trying to make?

Analysis

(20-30 minutes)

Introduce the video segment from *America's Most Wanted*, *Unsolved Mysteries*, or similar show to identify production techniques that make footage look "real." Describe the story and give any key information needed to understand the scenes and to help participants distinguish between real and dramatized segments.

Distribute Handout #4:

Distribute Handout #4 *Scorecard*. As you watch the segment, instruct the members of the group to:

- Call out when the scene switches from "documentary" to "dramatized" techniques.
- Using Handout #4 *Scorecard*, designate one (or several) person(s) to keep track of documentary and dramatized footage, writing down a two or three word description of the scene.
- Make note of *techniques* in the dramatized segments that make the scene seem more real (such as jerky camera work and weird angles, grainy, poorly lit footage, sound effects, news-like interviews, etc.).

Cue video clip:

When the video segment is finished, make a list (on overhead screen, board or tablet paper) of production elements that contribute to the sense of realism, for instance, jerky camera work and weird angles, grainy, poorly lit footage, sound effects, news-like interviews played by actors, etc.

Discussion:

Suggested discussion questions:

- Name techniques used in the segment.
- How was each technique used?
- What emotional or intuitive impression did the technique give? How?
- Rescreen portions of the segment if necessary.

Key Points:

- Pictures *represent* reality (they aren't *mirrors* of reality).
- Staged events can be made to look real using identifiable production techniques.

Reflection

(20-25 minutes)

In small groups of 4-6, imagine that your group is preparing a video media release about an issue of concern to you. (You may need to explain what a *video news release* is. See the Ideas for Followup section at the end of the Leader's Guide for a definition of a video news release).

- What could you do to present your issue in as positive a light as possible? (It may help to decide an imaginary issue. Choose one of relevance to your group or class. For example, the possible effects of a landfill, incinerator, or new road in your neighborhood, or reasons why you support particular legislation or a local congressional candidate, or the need for a new school in your neighborhood, or how little league baseball helps young people in your community, etc.)
- Who would you choose as your spokesperson? What would this person say and not say?
- How would you arrange the lights and cameras? Why?
- What emotional reaction would you try to elicit in viewers? How?

Discussion:

Suggested discussion questions:

- What are some dangers of groups controlling their presentations in this way?
- What personal, societal or religious values helped you make your decisions (about what to do in your video)?
- How can we influence the impact of this kind of "slanting" of presentations?

Action

(10-15 minutes)

1. Now that you understand how images can influence ideas and attitudes, how might this information change the way you watch the news or read the newspapers?

2. Follow up on the values discussed in the previous activity. How can we apply these values in our response to the media environment? What local leaders (pastors, politicians, media analysts) might help clarify appropriate responses to video news releases and other news practices? Are there films or texts that might provide guidance? If so, plan a future session in which you invite a local leader to speak, study a text, or show a video that may offer guidance on these issues.

3. If several participants seemed particularly enthusiastic about the video news release that their small group imagined, suggest that a team be formed to produce the video. This is not as overwhelming as it might seem. With some careful planning, a camcorder can accomplish amazing things — and, if you have a local public access TV station, the station might be able to help your group produce a good video at little or no cost, and even broadcast it!

Evaluation and Closing:

(10 minutes)

Get feedback for improving future sessions. Distribute the Evaluation form on page 29 or ask the participants to quickly tell you what they liked about this session. Then ask what they were disappointed with. Take notes so that you improve your leadership performance next time!

Remind the group that without quality information we cannot have a democracy. Gather group in a circle and ask each participant to name, in one sentence, what they learned in the session that will make them more informed citizens.

Preview next session: "What's Missing in the News: Media and Democracy." Invite participants to bring in alternative newspapers, newsletters or magazines.

Thank you's to participants.

MODULE

3

What's Missing in the News: Democracy and the Media

Concept:

Participants will examine why some stories are missing or under-reported in mainstream news and will list of the types of control that restrict news coverage as well as explore alternative news sources.

Goals:

- To learn to evaluate the quality of TV news.
- To reflect on the relationship between democracy and the media.
- To become more familiar with alternative news sources.

Leader Preparation:

- In *News for the 90's*, read:
  "Balance Bias with Critical Questions" (p. 5)
  "Project Censored Exposes Media's Untold Stories" (p. 7)
- Record a half-hour national news broadcast. If possible, choose a newscast segment that includes information about something your group is particularly interested in.
- Make a trip to your local newsstand. (This trip can be conducted as a class field trip or assignment). Buy several alternative news magazines or newspapers. These publications may not always be available but dealers may be willing to order specific titles for you. (Refer to the supplementary resource *Alternative News Sources.*)
- One useful alternative publication that can be ordered by mail is *Extra!* published by *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting*. Sample copies are available at no cost. Contact *FAIR* at (212) 633-6700, or write: FAIR, 130 West 25th Street, New York, NY 10001.
- Arrange the room so that the group can easily move to smaller groups of 3-4.

Materials Needed:

- Videotape segment of a nightly national news broadcast
- Stopwatch or watch with a second hand
- Copies of the following Handouts #5 *Project Censored's Top Ten Censored Stories, 1992-1993*, #6 *News Broadcast Story Lineup*, and #7 *Alternative News Sources.*
- A VCR and monitor
- Several copies of alternative news publications
- Blackboard and chalk or large tablet and markers
- Paper and pencils for each participant
- Tape

Required Time:

1-1/2 to 2 hours

Module 3

Introduction:

Briefly explain that the theme of this session is how under-reported or missing stories in mainstream news reflects and shapes the national political agenda and affects the democratic process. A good place to begin is perhaps asking participants what news stories they think should be more reported in the news.

Awareness

(20-25 minutes)

Distribute Handout #5:

Distribute Handout #5 *Project Censored.* Tell about Project Censored (pg. 7, *Media&Values #50*). Give participants a few minutes to read the handout.

Possible discussion questions:

- What common issues seem to emerge year after year?
- What are the most important issues facing the public today? (Don't let the nightly news define them for you. Think environmental, economic, social, etc.)
- In general, what kinds of stories are the news media liable to under-report?

Distribute alternative publications:

Distribute alternative publications to groups of 3-5 for review and discussion. Ask participants to identify the some of the prominent issues reported in these publications. You may want to list these issues on the chalkboard or tablet.

Key Points:

- Some types of stories never, or almost never, make the mainstream news.
- Media coverage tends to focus on disasters and other kinds of bad news, especially TV violence.
- What makes important news for some—stock market quotations, for example—is not news for many, while other stories of concern to a great number of people are often ignored.
- From a news producers' standpoint, on-going problems "get stale." Old, unresolved issues disappear from newspapers and newscasts.

Analysis

(40-45 minutes)

Distribute Handout #6:

Distribute Handout #6 *News Broadcast Story Lineup.*

Explain that the group will now watch a typical nightly news show and write down information requested in Handout #6. This will require everyone's efforts since news stories move very quickly. One person or team can identify the story, another can time each story with a stop watch, a third can evaluate the kind and quality of pictures, a fourth can log commercials.

Cue video clip:

Discussion:

Possible discussion questions after the news video:

- How long does the average story last? What was the lead story?
- What's the ratio of commercials to news stories?
- Evaluate the quality of the information provided.
- What emotional impact does the news have? Does it make viewers feel in control of their lives? Does it make people feel overwhelmed and powerless? What contributes to this? Does it encourage people to act?
- What kinds of stories were missing or under-reported in the newscast just analyzed?

Ask the group to summarize their conclusions about the informational value of the news and the emotional consequences of the news.

Ask a participant to write these conclusions on the board.

Reflection

(20 minutes)

Choose one or more of the following activies:

1. Look back over the stories and photographs you have been working with in these sessions. Possible discussion questions:
   - Do the stories identify the sex, race and ethnicity of the people in the stories?
   - What assumptions are evident about who causes problems and who has the power and authority to resolve them?
   - How do these assumptions challenge or support your beliefs or convictions?

2. This session is titled "What's Missing in the News: Democracy and the Media." This suggests that the media play a crucial role in developing an informed citizenry. Possible discussion questions:
   - How has the media informed your own civic participation?
   - Describe times when the media identified policy issues or raised questions about a political candidate you would not have otherwise been aware of?
   - List examples of times you have been misdirected by the media.
   - How can we be better informed citizens?

3. Questions for discussion with the entire group:
   - What sources of information are you exposed to? (for example, radio, TV news, newspapers, magazines, "infotainment" or magazine programs, newsletters, classes, etc.) Make as specific a list as possible.
   - How accurate do you believe these sources to be?
   - Who do you think controls access to these sources?
   - What is the attitude or world view of the sources?
   - How wide a range of views are you being exposed to?

Action

(15 minutes)

1. If participants seems particularly interested in alternative news sources, plan a future session to share alternative news with each other. Obtain one or several of the items listed in Handout #7, *Alternative News Sources*. In particular, order a tape from *Pacifica Radio Archive, Alternative Radio* or *The Christic Institute*. Or encourage participants to become subscribers to different alternative news magazines and exchange!

2. If your group or class identified significant assumptions about the sex, race or ethnicity of news reporting (particularly of a specific paper or local TV news organization), form a team to contact editors, reporters or community leaders with your findings. Challenge these writers and leaders to become more equitable in the use of media images in the news (or challenge community leaders to challenge reporters and editors).

3. An excellent activity for students whose school airs *Channel One News* in their classrooms is to compare the newscasts each day for a week and analyze the program in terms of what stories are included and what stories are missing or under-reported. How is the fact that these broadcasts are designed for pre-teen and teenage audiences affect the kinds of news stories shown? Can you count on *Channel One* for everything you need to know to be informed? Can you count on *any* one source?

Evaluation and Closing:

(10 Minutes)

Get feedback for improving future sessions. Distribute the Evaluation form on page 29 or ask the participants to quickly tell you what they liked about this session. Then ask them what they were disappointed with. Take notes so that you improve your leadership performance next time.

Thank all participants for their contribution to the workshop sessions.

If you will be conducting another workshop tell participants about it now.

HANDOUT #1:
News for the '90s

You Are The Producer

Rules of The TV News Game

As the Producer of the local newscast, *Your World in 22 Minutes*, you must exercise "news judgment" and select from many possible stories. Your decisions will be based on:

1. The importance of the story - Does it involve significant conflict or signal pending change?
2. What will hold your audience's interest? Does it affect their lives or tap their interests? Will it move them?
3. Timeline. do you need to run the story today or will the story keep?
4. Balance. Include the bad news with the good news.
5. The quality of the pictures.

Order thestories listed below and limit yourself to 21-23 minutes (the length of a standard commercial news broadcast).

Don't forget: Your first story (the "lead") should be the one that's most newsworthy *and* will keep your audience from tuning in the competition.

[Please note that these sample news stories are unusually long for the purpose of the exercise. Most news stories rarely last more than two minutes and are often as short as l5 seconds.]

Sample News Stories

Story	Picture Quality	Length
Community Group Protests Toxic Waste Disposal Site	So-so	2.5 minutes
Vice President comes to visit regional high school	Good	3 minutes
Striking Workers Arrested	Good	2.5 minutes
6th week of Teachers Strike	Poor	2 minutes
Opening of Community Center for Kids at Risk	So-so	3 minutes
Heavy Storms in northern region for 3rd day	Good	2.5 minutes
Former mayor dies	Good	3 minutes
Football Team makes state regionals	So-so	2.5 minutes
Local Corporation to be investigated by EPA	Poor	2 minutes
Pop star comes back to hometown	Good	3 minutes
Welfare recipients say lines are getting worse	So-so	2 minutes
Food Feature: The New Asian Markets	Good	2 minutes
Weather Report with Graphics	Good	2 minutes
Profile: Local Citizen with a Garage Full of TVs	Good	3 minutes

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HANDOUT #2:
News for the '90s

How to Analyze A News Story

1. Compare headlines and story content. Headlines are probably the most important aspect of news stories. Most people "shop" headlines to determine which articles to read. After reading ana article, propose alternative headlines that emphasize different facts.
   - *How accurately does the actual headline encapsulate the article? Does the headline slant one's reading of the article?*

2. Identify politically-charged labels, adjectives and verbs. Word choices can help identify reporters' biases. Have your family or group read an article and list words that seem politically charged. For example:
   - *Was the 1992 Los Angeles unrest called a "riot," "uprising" or "rebellion?" What connotation does each word imply?*

3. Question the hidden agenda of suspicious sources. Sometimes reporters need to speak with sources "off the record." Often, however, sources use their anonymity to further their own agendas.
   - *When a reporter cites "top U.S. officials," "company informants," or other anonymous sources, whose position is left out? What ulterior motive might a source have?*

4. Consider whether the placement of ideas and sources affects story impact. Try cutting apart a newspaper article and pasting it back together in a different order.
   - *Does the tenor of the article change when dissenting opinions become the lead? Whose position is stressed by the original arrangement of the story?*

5. Look for non-white, non-male perspectives. North American media rely heavily on white, male officials for their news.
   - *How does the news change when seen from the perspective of women or other races?*

   For a class or group project, have group members tally the sex and race of sources cited in a television, radio, or print report.

6. Compare photographs and photo captions to the news stories connected with them. Manipulation of digital images is not the only way to change the meaning of a picture. As with headlines, readers "shop" a newspaper by scanning pictures and reading captions—whether or not they read the associated articles.
   - *Are photographs and their captions faithful to the articles connected with them? How does a picture or caption influence the meaning of an article?*

7. Compare news stories to common sense. Be aware of obvious misstatements of facts that defy common sense. In the aftermath of the 1991 Exxon Valdez oil spill, one article stated that much of the oil spill "is gone, most by natural action."
   - *So where did it go? Did it evaporate—or is it now mixed with billions of gallons of water?*

8. Be suspicious of polls and statistics. Polling data and statistics are notoriously deceptive.
   - *Ask "which perspective does this data seem to support?" Then try rearranging the same data so that it presents a different perspective.*

Adapted with permission from chapter three, "Media Con Games: How to See Through Them," in *Unreliable Sources: A Guide to Detecting Bias in News Media*, by Martin A. Lee and Norman Soloman. Lyle Stuart/Carol Publishing, 600 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10022, (212) 486-2200.

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HANDOUT #3:
News for the '90s

Score Card

Keep score of real and dramatized events. Don't forget to think about sound as well as pictures. (Were those gun shots real or fake?) Look for actors (as opposed to real people), camera work, props, sound effects, music.

	Documentary/Real	**Dramatized**
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		

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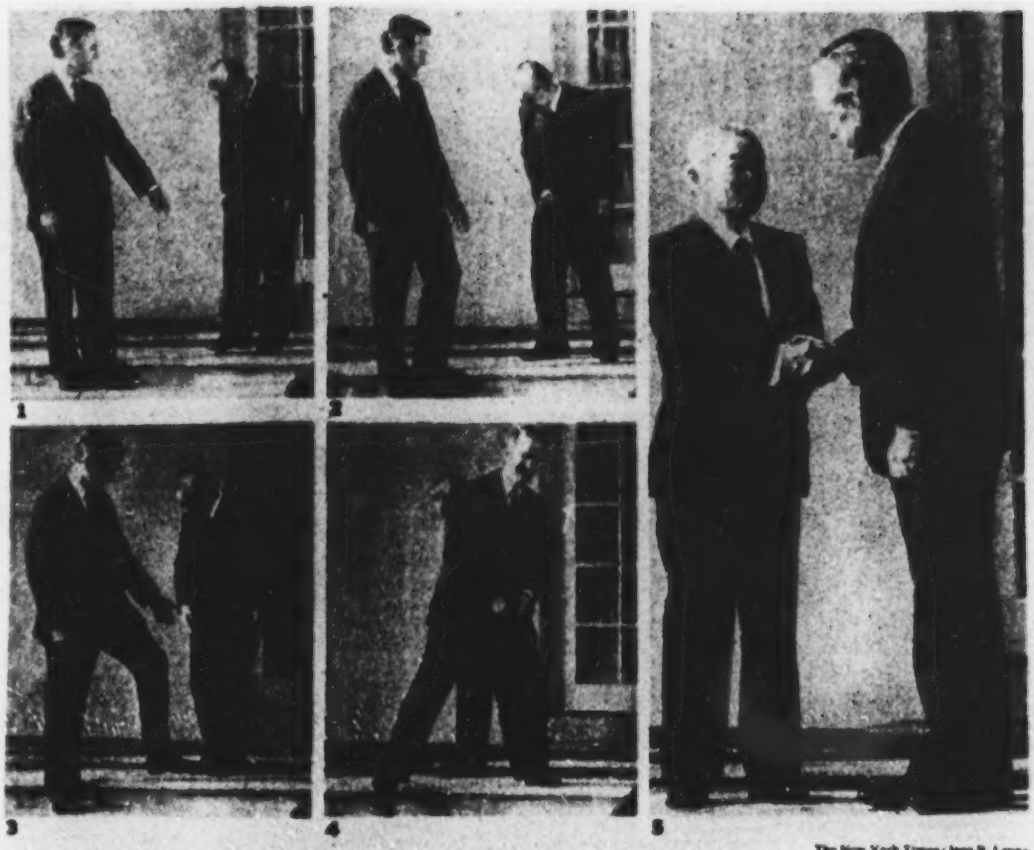
HANDOUT #4:
News for the '90s

"Photo Op" – Creating the Perfect Handshake



The New York Times/Jose R. Lopez

The White House Shuffle, or How to Set Up a Photo Op

1 As President Bush pointed out what he thought were the markers for their photo opportunity positions, **2** Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita of Japan showed how he saw it. **3** As the Prime Minister scrunched his feet, **4** the President found his spot **5** and the moment was duly recorded. Page A5.

Caption: These five photographs illustrate the preliminary steps involved in producing the perfect handshake between President Bush and Japan's Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita.

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HANDOUT #5:
News for the '90s

Project Censored

Project Censored is an organization that publishes an annual list of under-reported news stories. It was created in 1976 by Dr. Carl Jensen, Professor of Communication Studies at Sonoma State University in California.

The goal of Project Censored is to explore and publicize the extent of censorship by locating stories about significant issues of which the public should be aware, but is not, for a variety of reasons. The main issue raised by Project Censored is the failure of the mass media to provide citizens with all the information they need to make informed decisions concerning their own lives.

Below are lists from 1992 and 1993. What types of stories seem consistently under-reported? By looking in the alternative publications, have you found any stories that deserved better coverage than they received in the mainstream media?

Project Censored compiles their list each year by public nomination. Are there stories you would like to send to their Most Censored List? Nominations can be sent to Project Censored, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California 94928.

1992

1. **The Great Media Sell-Out.**
   The quid pro quo between major media monopolies and the Reagan/Bush administrations silenced the nation's [media] watchdogs.
2. **Corporate Crime Dwarfs Street Crime.**
   While the press frightens the public with headlines about street crime, corporate crime grows at an accelerated pace.
3. **Censored Election Issues.**
   Bush and Iran-contra; Bush's Team 100; Homelessness; Dan Quayle's Council on Competitiveness; the Death Rate of Iraqi Children After the Gulf War.
4. **World's Leading Merchant of Death.**
   How the United States became the world's leading producer and supplier of weapons.
5. **Iraqgate and The Watergate Law.**
   The Bush Administration stalls Iraqgate probe and Senate Democrats, fearing an independent investigation of their activities, join Republicans to defeat the Watergate Law.
6. **Winning the War on Drugs.**
   Drug statistics reveal that President George Bush lied when he announced we were winning the war on drugs.
7. **Trashing Federal Regulations for Profit.**
   An extraordinary correlation between major campaign contributions and federal regulatory relief is revealed.
8. **Government Secrecy Makes a Mockery of Democracy.**
   The nation's information policy is totally out of control with widespread over-classification.
9. **Advertising Pressure Corrupts a Free Press.**
   The subtle, but pervasive, influence of advertisers on the content of the news.
10. **Pentagon's Post Cold War Black Budget.**
    Despite the end of the Cold War, $100 million a day still goes to support the national-security machinery and defense industry in the U.S.

1993

1. **The U.S. is Killing Its Young.**
   Nine out of 10 young people murdered in industrialized nations are slain in the United States.
2. **Why Are We Really in Somalia?**
   Four major U.S. oil companies have exclusive concessions to explore and exploit oil reserves in Somalia.
3. **Sandia Report on Education.**
   Investigation into education in the U.S. did not support a school voucher system and was swept under the rug.
4. **The Real Welfare Cheats: America's Corporations.**
   Government Administrations rarely mention the largest recipients of taxpayer largesse: U.S. corporations.
5. **The Hidden Tragedy of Chernobyl.**
   The far-reaching international impact of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster was censored in Russia and underreported in the U.S.
6. **U.S. Army Quietly Resumes Bio-Warfare Testing After 10-Year Hiatus.**
   The U.S. Army has brought biological warfare testing back to a site declared unsafe a decade earlier.
7. **Ecological Disaster Challenges the Exxon Valdez.**
   The environmental nightmare caused by selenium-contaminated drainwater makes the Exxon Valdez oil spill pale in comparison.
8. **America's Deadly Doctors.**
   A well-documented study revealed that 30,000 to 60,000 of America's doctors are impaired or incompetent.
9. **There's a Lot of Money to be Made in Poverty.**
   Some of America's largest corporations finance a "poverty industry" that exploits and defrauds low-income and minority consumers through price gouging.
10. **Haiti: Drugs, Thugs, the CIA and the Deterrence of Democracy.**
    Secret U.S. involvement in Haitian politics includes CIA-backed military Haitian officials who help smuggle cocaine from Colombia into the U.S.

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HANDOUT #6
News for the '90s

News Broadcast Story Lineup

Network: _____

Date: _____

	Story#	Story	Pictures	Length
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____	_____	_____
13.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Note: Don't forget to include ads as well.

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HANDOUT #7
News for the '90s

Alternative News Sources

Although this list isn't exhaustive it will give you a place to begin before you go to your newsstand or library. An additional and invaluable source is *The Alternative Press Index* carried by many universities and other large libraries. Each year API indexes hundreds of alternative publications by subject and author. Also, look for ethnic publications such as *Jet*, *Ebony* and *Hispanic*.

News Magazines and Newsletters

Commentary Magazine
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, NY 10022-2746
(212) 751 4000
Monthly essays on politics, society, theological and culture. Generally conservative with special Jewish content.

Conservative Digest
Viguerie Communications Corporation
The National Press Building #800
Washington DC 20045
(202) 662 8919
Monthly conservative slant on education, government regulation and other issues.

Covert Information Action Bulletin
Box 50272
Washington DC 20004
(202) 331 9763
Quarterly report on undercover activities of U.S. and Western intelligence agencies.

Earth Island Journal
300 Broadway #28
San Francisco, CA 94133-3312
(415) 788-3666
Quarterly international environmental news magazine which uses electronic journalism, computer networks and desk top publishing to report on local news from around the world.

In These Times
2040 N. Milwaukee
Chicago, IL 60647
(312) 772 0100
A weekly providing alternative domestic and international news stories and cultural reviews.

Left Business Observer
250 West 85th Street
New York, NY 10024
(212) 874 4020
A monthly review of business activity and their impact on economic and social life.

Media Culture Review
2025 Eye Street, NW, #1124
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 887-0022
A monthly review of progressive articles published in alternative publications concerning the media.

Monthly Review
Monthly Review Foundation
155 West 23rd Street
New York, NY 10011
(212) 691 2555
Monthly independent socialist journal that provides substantial analyses of world economic and political events.

Mother Jones
Foundation for National Progress
1663 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 558 8881
Monthly magazine of politics and the arts.

The Multinational Monitor
Essential Information Inc.
P.O. Box 19405
Washington DC 20036
(202) 387 8034
Monthly review of multinational corporations and banks and their effect on economic development.

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The Nation
Nation Enterprises
72 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10011
(212) 242 8400
Weekly journal of politics, economics, education, foreign policy, labor, law and other social issues, literature and the arts.

National Catholic Reporter
115 East Armor Boulevard
Kansas City, MO 64111
(815) 531-0538
A weekly newspaper that goes beyond coverage of religion to critique national and international news and events.

The Progressive
409 East Main Street
Madison, WI 53703
(608) 257 4626
Political, social, and economic analysis and commentary from an independent left perspective.

Tikkun
Institute for Labor and Mental Health
5100 Leona Street
Oakland, CA 94609
(415) 482 0805
Quarterly Jewish critique of politics, culture, and society.

Utne Reader
The Fawkes Building
1624 Harmon Place
Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 338 5040
Published six times a year. UTNE reprints the "best of the alternative press."

Whole Earth Review
Point 27, Gate F Road
Sausalito, CA 94965
(415) 332-1716
Quarterly covering progressive ideas about technology and the environment.

Zeta Magazine
Institute for Social and Cultural Communications
116 Street Botolph Street
Boston MA 02115
(617) 236 5878
Independent political magazine. Critical thinking on politics, culture, society, and economic life in the U.S.

Critiques of Journalism

Columbia Journalism Review
Columbia University
School of Journalism
700A Journalism Building
New York, NY 10027
(212) 854 2716
Monthly that provides critical analysis of print and broadcast media.

Extra!
Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting
130 West 25th Street
New York, NY 10001
(212) 633 6700
Published 8 times a year, Extra identifies bias and omission in the mainstream news media.

American Journalism Review
2233 Wisconsin Avenue NW
Suite 442
Washington DC 20007
(202) 333 6800
Monthly journal that examines and reports on the press in order to illuminate journalistic practices.

World Press Review
Stanley Foundation
200 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016
(212) 889 5155
Monthly commentary on coverage of world events drawn from international media coverage.

Radio

Radio programs often provide valuable sources of alternative news and information. Write for free catalogs of radio tapes which feature noted speakers on the environment, foreign policy, and other domestic and international issues.

Pacifica Radio Archive
3729 Cahuenga Boulevard West
North Hollywood, CA 91604
(800)-735-0230

Alternative Radio
1814 Spruce
Boulder, CO 80320

Christic Institute
8773 Venice Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90034
(213) 287-1556

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SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Evaluation

In order to make future media education sessions more effective and responsive to your needs, please take a few minutes to fill out the following evaluation thoughtfully and with candor.

Beside each statement below, write the number that best reflects your evaluation of the session (5 is best, 1 is worst). For each item you rate 3, 2, or 1, please write a two or three word explanation next to the statement.

Strongly Disagree (worst) 1 ← 2 — 3 — 4 → 5 **Strongly Agree (best)**

____ 1. From the beginning of today's session, I understood the purpose of the session.

____ 2. The structure and flow of today's session was logical and well-designed.

____ 3. Each activity was relevant to the topic.

____ 4. .I gained useful knowledge that I can use immediately.

____ 5. I will watch, read, or listen to media differently because of today's session.

____ 6. The leader facilitated group interaction in a way that enhanced the group's learning.

____ 7. The leader thought my input was important.

____ 8. It was easy to interrupt and ask questions without disrupting the flow of the session.

____ 9. When the leader suggested discussion questions, I wanted to share my ideas.

____10. There was a balance of instruction and group sharing.

____11. Handouts were adequate and helpful.

____12. The leader adjusted/adapted the session to match the make-up of the group.

____13. My expectations for the session were met.

What is your overall opinion of today's session? (circle one)

Excellent Good Fair Mediocre Poor

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Please answer the following questions briefly:

What was your favorite part of today's session?

What are you aware of now that you were not aware of before today's session?

What action do you see yourself taking as a result of today's session?

What could have been included that would have made today's session more relevant to you?

What did other participants think of today's session?

Additional comments:

This evaluation let me express my feelings about the session effectively (circle one):

Yes No (please explain why)

Circle other topics that you'd like to see dealt with similarly in future sessions with your group:

Sexism in the media
Media and citizenship
Media and children
Media and global communication
Media and the1991 Gulf War
Media and addiction
Media and the image culture
Media and violence

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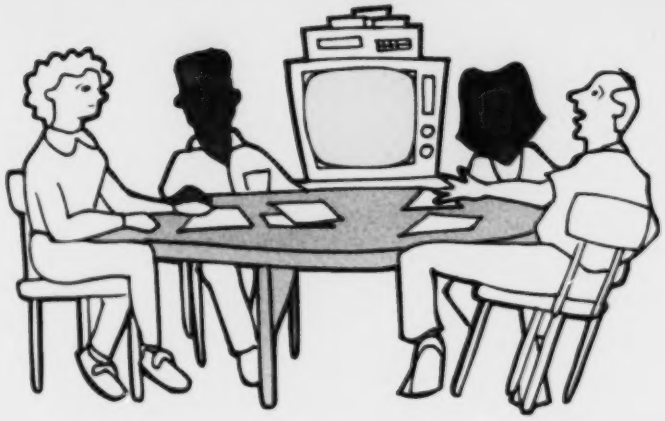
Follow-up Sessions, Resources, Action Ideas

News for the '90s



1. New trends and issues in the news media.

Since *News for the '90s* was published in 1991, profound changes in the news media have transformed the way we get our news. You may want to consider addressing some of these issues and trends in the new sessions, perhaps developing additional activities and creating new handouts:

News and Entertainment. The idea of turning a news headline into a television drama is nothing new. Lately, however, more and more news programs are borrowing elements of entertainment to increase viewership—making "stars" out of news anchors, using splashy graphics and catchy titles for news segments and rushing to get "live" pictures from a crime scene. All these elements add excitement to traditionally staid newscasts and hopefully attract more viewers—thus increasing advertising revenue for their stations. But should a newscast be entertaining? Are we more informed by the flashy graphics and dramatic footage?

Reality Shows. Reality programs like *Cops*, *Rescue 911*, *Unsolved Mysteries*, *America's Most Wanted* and *Eyewitness Video*, show the real stories of crime and tragedy where the viewer is able to watch the real story unfold as it really happens. According to Joe Saltzman, associate mass media editor of *USA Today*, producers and advertisers love reality shows because they are inexpensive to produce and generate high ratings. But Saltzman also points out that producers of these shows "...receive the credibility of news programming without having to adhere to any of the acepted rules of newsgathering and documentary production." Is Saltzman right? Do reality programs compromise journalistic standards? Is it fair or "right" to exploit personal tragedy for the sake of ratings and revenue? What makes these shows so popular? How much of an influence do these shows have upon the format of regular newscasts?

Checkbook Journalism. In the race for higher ratings and revenues, the once rare practice of "checkbook journalism," paying someone for a news story, is on the rise. Some journalists, most notably Walter Cronkite denounce the idea of paying huge sums of money for a story. Others like Bill O'Reilly, host of *Inside Edition* say it's a necessary practice in the tough, competitive world of TV news magazines. What is the state of objective journalism when Tonya Harding receives $300,000+ from *Inside Edition* for an exclusive story of her involvement in the attack on Nancy Kerrigan? What is the newsworthiness of *Hard Copy* if it pays Joey Buttafuco $100,000 for an interview? Can a story be accurate if it is signed, sealed and delivered in exchange for big dollars? What price truth?

The Influence of Tabloid News Programs. Shows such as *A Current Affair*, *Hard Copy* and *Inside Edition* are modeled after the tabloids sold in supermarkets. The stories on these shows

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tend to be sensational and exploitative, centered on celebrities or the latest grizzly murder. But should sensational stories like The Tonya Harding-Nancy Kerrigan case, the Menendez brothers murder trial and Michael Jackson's alleged molestations, dominate the mainstream news over more important stories on health care, crime, unemployment? Is legitimate journalism being compromised for the sake of ratings? How much influence do the TV tabloids have on setting the national news agenda?

Video News Release. VNRs are common today as a means of releasing news-like information to the public that sheds favorable light on a company, government or individual. Local and national news directors, working under severe budget constraints, often find video news releases too good to pass up despite the fact that they push the boundary of traditional journalistic ethics. Video news releases are free and they provide high quality pictures.

Although video news releases are widely used by corporations to promote products, another example was the U.S. government's cockpit footage of "smart bombs" honing in on Iraqi targets during the 1991Persian Gulf War. This footage was recorded by government sources—not by the TV networks or independent journalists—much like a news release. These images were then released as "news" to image-starved TV producers. As viewers, how can we be sure that the news footage we're watching is not a VNR? How do these effect journalistic standards?

2. Don't forget the newspaper.

Newspapers and magazines are also changing under the same economic and popular forces that have changed the electronic news media. You'll want to note these new trends in the sessions and perhaps develop activities using print news media samples. To get you thinking, here are some good resources to check out:

• **How to Read a Newspaper** - An excellent, low-cost resource for class or group analysis; cleverly desiend to imitate traditional newspaper format. The October 1991 issue of EXTRA! Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, P.O. Box 3000, Dept. FAIR, Denville, NJ 07834; (212) 633-6700. $2.50 each or package of 100/$1.10 each.

• **The Newspaper Association of America Foundation** sponsors a variety of educational programs that use newspapers in the classroom. Their goal is to help students read behind the headlines and use the newspaper to its fullest extent. Many local newspapers sponsor educational programs that use their newspapers in the classroom. For example, the *Los Angeles Times* has complete learning modules centered on specific subjects. Economics teachers develop lessons using the business section. English teachers might develop students' writing skills by using editorials and opinion columns. To find out more about these programs, call or write your local newspaper or contact the Newspaper Association of America Foundation, The Newspaper Center, 11600 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA 22091 (703) 648-1000.

3. Feature films can spark discussion.

The profession and industry of news reporting has been the subject of feature films over the years. Caught between the economic realities and pressures of running a business and the pursuit of the truth behind a story, the news media make a great subject for a movie. These films are excellent resources on the news media as most will have one or two scenes that can be used to spark discussion. Many of these films are available at your local video store or local public library:

The Paper (1994). A modern day story about the newspaper business and mad pursuit of newspaper sales. Stars Glenn Close and Micheal Keaton.

Broadcast News (1988). An intelligent drama about corporate politics, inflated egos and image manipulation behind the scenes at a broadcast news station. Stars Holly Hunter, Albert Brooks and William Hurt.

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Absence of Malice (1981). An investigative reporter bends the truth for a headline and destroys the reputation of an innocent man. Stars Paul Newman and Sally Field.
All the President's Men (1976). The story of Bob Woodward and (name) Bernstein journalistic efforts to expose the Watergate coverup. Stars Dustin Hoffman and Robert Redford.
Network (1976). An explosive indictment of the television and the news, specifically the quest for high ratings and sensationalism. Acadamy Award winner. Stars Peter Finch, William Holden and Faye Dunaway.
The Front Page (1974). Based on the Charles MacArthur-Ben Hecht play, this film is about tough Chicago newspapermen in the 1920s. Stars Walter Matthau and Jack Lemmon.

5. Short films and videos.

A number of excellent short films and videos that deal with the news are available for viewing and great resources for group discussions.
What Makes News (1993) Role-play video illustrating how news from Third World countries is selected and edited by First World news bureaus. Included in module three in *Global Questions* Media Literacy Workshop Kit™. 18 minutes. Center for Media Literacy, 1962 S. Shenandoah, Los Angeles, CA 90034, (800) 226-9494. $44. 95
Reporting- (1991). 4 part series on issues a reporter faces doing stories. 52 minutes each. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, P.O. Box 2053, Princeton, N.J. 08543, (800) 257-5126. $349
Inside Television News (1990). 5-part series behind-the-camera and off-camera views of broadcast news. *For secondary schools.* 52 minutes. New Dimension Media, 85803 Lorane Highway, Eugene, OR 97405. (800) 288-4456. $125
Current Events (1989). 56 minutes. New Day Films, 121 West 27th St., Suite 902, New York, NY 10001, (212) 645-8210. $385
Racism in the News (1989). Although designed for professional reporters, it's a good starter for analyzing the news industry. 59 minutes. Ecufilm, Racism Videos, 810 12th Ave. South, Nashville, TN 37203 (800) 251-4091. $99
The World is Watching (1988). Follows Peter Jennings/ABC News gathering and reporting news on Central America. Devastating anaylysis of how the networks work. 59 minutes. First Run/Icarus Films, 153 Waveryl Place, New York, NY 10014, (800) 876-1710. $390
Only the News That Fits (1989) is a 28 minute version of the same. $190
Inside Television News (1990). 5-part series behind-the-camera and off-camera views of broadcast news. *For secondary schools.* 52 minutes. New Dimension Media, 85803 Lorane Highway, Eugene, OR 97405. (800) 288-4456. $125
Newspaper Wars (1985). Looks at the changing role of newspapers in society and the effects of increased media ownership concentration. 26 minutes. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, P.O. Box 2053, Princeton, N.J. 08543, (800) 257-5126.

6. Religion and the news media.

For a analysis of the news media from a religious perspective, The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center has published an exhuastive and excellent review of religious issues in the news entitiled *Bridging the Gap: Religion and the News Media* by John Dart and Jimmy Allen. The 88 page book contains surveys and charts, objective analysis of religious coverage in both print and electronic news media and a bibliography. A great resource for creating activities and sparking discussions about religion and the news media.

The November 1993 issue of *The Freedom Forum*, an 8-page newsletter is also dedicated to religion and the news media. Both of these publications are available at no charge from the The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, Vanderbilt University, 1222 16th Ave. Nashville, TN 37212, (615) 321-9588.

7. Find other ways to express your media literacy.

At Home: Talk to your kids about their TV viewing. Foster their critical viewing skills. Keep tabs on their viewing. Not everything they see will be viewed at home, but skills they learn at home can help them wherever they watch. To learn more about media literacy skills for the home, parent groups might want to organize additional sessions using the Center's *Parenting in a TV Age Workshop Kit*™ (see inside back cover).

In the Office: Tell friends about what you've learned in the workshops. At coffee break or over lunch, help them "read between the lines." Or, organize a workplace discussion group to crtique how the media (both print and electronic) covers news events.

Among Friends: One simple way to encourage discussion among friends is to establish a media salon. Gather friends or coworkers together on a regular basis for discussion of media issues. Or join the *Utne Reader's* Neighborhood Salon Association. Membership is $12 per year. Participants get a list of potential salon members in their area as well as a quarterly newsletter and a copy of *The Salon-Keeper's Companion*, a guide to starting and sustaining a salon.The *Utne Reader*, 1624 Harmon Place, Suite 30o, Minneapolis, MN 55403 (612)338 5040.

Among Community Groups Promote media literacy at your school, place of worship, or other community center. The Center for Media Literacy has produced several other media literacy workshop kits that expand ideas introduced in this workshop. Particularly relevent workshop kits are *Global Questions*, *Citizenship*, and *Images of Conflict*. (See a complete list of additional workshops on the inside back cover).

8. Let media makers know where you stand.

Don't forget to publicize the results of your workshop sessions. Let others in the community know what you're learning and how they can hold workshops for their members. Ask writers in your group to contact local newspapers, magazines, workplace or church/synagogue newsletter editors to see if they are interested in articles of tips and ideas that the group develops.

Invite your local newspaper or TV station to send a reporter to interview participants and do a story on the workshop. Emphasize the positive nature of the workshop and specific actions that resulted. Don't be shy. Call news editors and reporters several times if need be. Try to reach busy reporters first thing in the morning and keep an eye out for reporters you think might be interested in media literacy issues.

Broadcasters do respond to letters from the public. If you're upset about the violence in the news or any other issue, call the station and find out who's in charge. Don't forget to write or call when you want to applaud a show with positive values. Local stations can give you the address of network headquarters or the names of executives or producers. National addresses of networks and cable services are often printed in *TV Guide*.

9. Start a media bulletin board.

If your group meets regularly in a school, church, community center or library, establish a Media Bulletin Board in your meeting room or a well-traveled hallway. Materials generated during the workshops can be displayed, as well as magazine and newspaper articles, announcements, cartoons and other items of interest that participants find. A Media Bulletin Board provides an ongoing forum for your group to exchange ideas beyond the workshops. It can also generate interest in media literacy issues and raise awareness among people who have not been able to attend.

10. Establish a monitoring group.

One effective way to stay media literate is to set up a monitoring group. Data gathered through monitoring groups can be powerful ammunition when approaching editors and producers with requests for change. Many public interest groups have media monitoring groups that keep tabs on media coverage of issues of concern to them. (If they don't, they ought to!).

Join a media task force–or begin one of your own. You might begin by tracking how a particular issue is being covered. Systematically-collected information of this sort is often of great interest to the media. *Be sure to publicize your findings.*

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Other Media Literacy Workshop Kits™ Available

- ***Break the Lies that Bind*** is a six-session workshop kit exploring how advertising and media teach us to be males and females, and influence our perceptions of beauty and body image. Especially good for teens and their parents. $27.95.

- ***Parenting in a TV Age*** contains four sessions to help parent groups explore issues of children and television. Includes five important ideas to teach kids about TV. $27.95.

- ***Images of Conflict*** provides dozens of activities and resources to process what we can learn from media coverage of the Persian Gulf War. Includes 12-minute video essay: *Lines in the Sand*. $44.95.

- ***Selling Addiction*** provides two sessions to uncover the myths behind cigarette and alcohol ads, and specifically how advertisers target children and teens, especially females and minorities. Includes 18-minute video with three discussion starter segments analyzing typical commercials and advertising techniques. $44.95.

- ***Living in the Image Culture*** is a comprehensive "primer" to explore how mass media influences our ideas, our values and our use of time and money. Leader's guide includes 15 interactive learning modules plus a series of 10 illustrated handout masters. $29.95.

- ***Citizenship in a Media Age*** is packed with ideas and activities to help groups of all ages acquire and evaluate the media information they need to be effective citizens. Leader's guide includes 12 flexible learning modules with 8 illustrated handout masters. $27.95.

- ***TV Alert*** contains eight creative learning modules and handout masters with ideas and activities to help classes and groups recognize and evaluate the subtle impact of TV everyday life. $27.95. Also available with video of six 15-minute segments: $57.95.

- ***Global Questions*** is packed with ideas and activities to help groups of all ages understand the media and its impact on the homogenization of world cultures. Includes 18-minute role-play video on how news from Third World countries is selected and edited by First World news bureaus. $44.95.

Order all of the above from the Center for Media Literacy, 1962 S. Shenandoah, Los Angeles, CA 90034. Or call (800)226-9494 for Visa and MasterCard orders over $10. Annual individual membership in the Center is $35 and entitles you to a 10 percent discount on all Center resources.

News For The '90s:
How to Analyze the News Media

A Media Literacy Workshop Kit™

- An excellent resource to explore the impact of the news media upon our lives.
- Practical materials with updated information for three interactive learning modules.
- Ideal for adult groups, high school classes, churches/synagogues and community centers.

WHY SHOULD YOU CONSIDER THIS WORKSHOP KIT?

News has changed dramatically from the days of the penny newspaper—even more so since the pioneering TV journalism of Walter Cronkite and Ed Murrow. Whether you listen to the radio, watch TV or read the newspapers, the news media is integral to our lives and an influential force in society.

Because we get most of our information about the world through media, it is vital to understand how the news media works and discover the real reasons why some stories make the 11 o'clock news or the front page and others don't.

News For the '90s contains three creative learning modules with ideas and activities to help classes and groups recognize and evaluate the impact of the news media in society. In the workshop sessions, participants will:

- Explore the agenda setting power of the news media, both print and electronic.
- Learn the ways in which public relations specialists manipulate news images for a desired effect.
- Explore why some stories go under-reported or are missing in the mainstream news media.

With its step-by-step leader's guide, ***News For the '90s*** provides a clear approach to TV literacy for groups of all ages in schools, churches/synagogues, community and youth organizations.

WHAT'S IN THIS KIT?

1. A step-by-step leader's guide with lesson plans for 3 flexible learning modules, 1 1/2 to 2 hours each. Also includes an updated and revised follow-up section with ideas and resources for further exploration.
2. A series of 7 illustrated handout masters accompany the lesson plans; license to reprint included.
3. 24-page issue of *Media&Values* magazine, *News for the '90s, A Question of Values*, containing background articles and thought provoking ideas for teacher/leader preparation.

WHO PREPARED THIS WORKSHOP KIT?

The Center for Media Literacy is a nonprofit membership organization pioneering a *new way of pro-active thinking* about the influence and impact of mass media in our time.

Media Literacy Workshop Kits™ grew out of the widely-acclaimed *Media&Values* magazine. Other kits are also available and more are in development. We welcome your membership.

ISBN 1-879419-01-7
U.S. $21.95
CDN $28.95

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